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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 2063
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SIPDIS

NEA/ARP, NEA/RA

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SUBJECT: GOK TO ENCOURAGE YEMEN REFORM AT RIYADH MEETING

REF: STATE 16107

Classified By: Political Counselor Pete O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (C) PolCouns on February 23 raised reftel points concerning the February 27-28 GCC Secretariat meeting in Riyadh on donor coordination in Yemen with Faisal Al-Houli, Counselor in MFA's Arab World Department. Al-Houli responded that the GOK views the upcoming meeting as very important and believes the GCC and other concerned nations need to respond quickly to resolve issues leading to instability in Yemen before that instability can affect other countries in the region. He agreed that it is essential for the GCC and other donor states to insist on reform on the ground in Yemen before undertaking additional pledges. Al-Houli commented that the GOK views the recent cease-fire with the Houthis as a positive development, but remains deeply concerned about the problems posed by some 250,000 IDPs near Sa'ada "who have been kicked out of their homes by opposing tribes and cannot return." The GOK also believes, Al-Houli said, that it will now be essential for donors to focus on encouraging economic development in Yemen's troubled south.

¶2. (C) Notwithstanding the GOK's concerns about instability in Yemen, Al-Houli said the GOK will likely look to the USG and its European partners to take the lead in identifying priority areas for assistance; here the GOK role would be "complementary." The GOK is not averse to contributing additional assistance down the road, Al-Houli suggested, but is for the time being waiting and watching to see what the GOY does with the assistance that has already been made available. If Yemen uses the existing donations well, he added, the GOK and other GCC states will be more inclined to provide additional resources.

¶3. (C) Al-Houli said the GOK is in full agreement with reftel points concerning the agenda for the March working group meetings and will work with our delegation to establish a common set of messages on priorities and principles, identify priority reform activities and determine how international partners can better coordinate support for these activities.

¶4. (C) Comment: Al-Houli's remark about the potential for instability from Yemen to spread quickly in the region reflects worries we have heard from numerous GOK officials about the consequences of a resurgent AQAP or an Al-Houthi movement somehow serving as an Iranian proxy. Notwithstanding these concerns, the GOK remains a cautious and conservative donor; that tendency will be amplified by the Kuwaiti conviction that the ROYG, and in particular President Saleh and his immediate family, are deeply corrupt, perhaps irredeemably so. End Comment.

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